

"Accept the Challenge"



*Idaho FFA Association
State Officer Candidate Guide*

*"The will to win is important, but the will to prepare is vital."
Joe Paterno*

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Introduction

There is no doubt each of you as state officer candidates has the will to win, but are you prepared? Are you ready to accept the challenge of participating in the rigors of state officer sifting and potentially being an Idaho State FFA Officer? For some this may be a decision you made this year, and others it may be a dream you've had as long as you can remember. As you study, memorizing names and facts about agriculture and FFA, remember one very important thing....know yourself!

It is easy to answer the questions: Can I do the job? Should I do the job? Will I do the job? A better question to answer is: Why do I want the job? Knowing what your heart desires is the only way you can answer that question. Knowing your true self will help you answer the following questions:

Why do you desire to serve over 4,000 FFA members in Idaho?

Why do you want to spend a year of your life traveling around the state, communicating a message of agriculture and youth leadership to thousands?

Why do you want to wear the blue jacket that has "association" on the back?

Search your heart, know its desires, and be passionate about your yearning to truly serve.

One thing you can never take back is a first impression. Make sure that what you do, say, and the image you show is the message of your true self. Make it a message that people will see and remember during your year of service and for the remainder of your life.

Are you in it for the right reasons? If so, ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!

What is an Idaho FFA State Officer?

The role of an Idaho FFA State Officer can best be described as someone who "facilitates member success." State Officers help promote FFA on a state-wide basis and act on behalf of all members at FFA and other agriculture related activities. State Officers can be found:

- At executive meetings and playing a role in determining the current scope and advancement of the Idaho FFA Association.

- Motivating members across the state, providing leadership workshops and conducting chapter visits.
- Participating in Business and Industry tours.
- Promoting and sharing the value of FFA, Agricultural Education and Agriculture in Idaho and the United States.
- Planning and carrying out activities for state leadership conference.
- Attend state wide Career Development Events and activities.
- Participating in developing a statewide program of activities.

Is there a difference in officer duties on the state level?

Duties of the State Officers are defined in the By-Laws of the Idaho FFA Association. While the By-Laws define each office, there are other duties assigned during the year. There are duties that require officers to work on District Officer Training, National FFA Convention, Idaho School Board Association Meeting, Mid-Winter Meeting, State Leadership Conference, various Idaho agriculture commodity meetings, and anything that the association participates part in. We are commonly asked to provide leadership in parliamentary procedure, reflections at meals, and presentations to youth groups around Idaho. Each state officer must be able to effectively work with people of all ages and all walks of life. State officers, even though they have different duties described in the constitution, are not ranked and are expected to be able to perform the duties of any other officer.

State Leadership Conference in Review:

When you arrive at State Leadership Convention, be ready to run! You'll meet other candidates and begin making amazing friends. The sifting process will include a written test, interviews, and possible group discussions or facilitation. Dr. Wolf, the Nominating Committee Coordinator, will provide an interview schedule to candidates' advisors prior to State Leadership Conference. Students may participate in CDE events during State Leadership conference; HOWEVER- ALL conflicts MUST be communicated to the State Officer Nom Com Coordinator prior to SLC (check the State Officer Application for this due date). The nom com coordinator will attempt to accommodate these conflicts- but candidates should prioritize appropriately. Excessive absences will require students to miss interviews.

Application:

The deadline for the written application is **March 1**. The application is scored prior to SLC. NO ADDITIONAL MATERIALS MAY BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION- ANY APPLICATION WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIALS WILL RECEIVE A SCORE OF ZERO.

Study references for the written exam and interviews include (but are not limited to):

- Official FFA Manual
- FFA Student Handbook
- Idaho State Degree Study Guide
- FFA New Horizons Magazine
- Robert's Rules of Order
- American Farm Bureau Federation
- United States Department of Agriculture
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture
- United States Department of Education

Written Exam:

This exam is divided into three components.

- 1 - FFA Knowledge
- 2 - Parliamentary Procedure
- 3 - Agricultural Issues and Knowledge

Written Activity:

You will be given a scenario requiring you to prepare a written response. Expect a scenario that a State Officer would encounter. The written response will be handwritten.

Possible Scenarios

- Declining an invitation to a banquet.
- Sending a thank you letter to a sponsor.
- Sending a congratulatory note to a member who received an honor.
- Requesting to make a chapter visit.
- Responding to an email of a member.

Interviews:

Possible formats include:

Round-Robin Interview- students will meet with nominating committee members one on one.

Stand and Deliver- Students will be given a scenario requiring them to prepare a short speech.

Individual Interview- Students will be interviewed by the entire nominating committee

Group Presentation- Students will be randomly grouped together with a possible scenario or task.

Managing Your Nerves:

Like competing in the Olympics, facing the nominating committee who scores your “performance” could change the course of your life in an understandable nerve-racking experience. It’s a one shot deal and you’ve got minutes to win the panel over. The most effective way to conquer such point losing jitters is to prepare ahead of time.

Keep in mind that members of the committee are real people. Like anyone, they work long hours with SAE’s, get the flu during judging season, and have car trouble. So, when you are hit with the shakes, sweaty palms, and rapid breathing, remember to relax and treat them as regular folks. It is a matter of keeping the experience in perspective. It is just a conversation with people. They mess up and make mistakes, they are not perfect, and they know that you are not. This will be your time in the spotlight. Why be nervous? Let it be fun! If you have your mental attitude right, it’s usually not too stressful.

Keep Your Composure:

In any competitive situation the unexpected can occur: a candidate trips walking into the room and knocks over the table as they sit down. Because mishaps do happen on any level of competition, remember that no disaster is so calamitous that you can’t handle it with poise. Always keep your composure. When the unexpected occurs, turn it to your advantage with honesty, humor, or wit.

Preparation and Practice = Strong Performance

1. Check your Motive
Ask yourself, "What is my motive for saying or writing this?" If your motive isn't positive or productive, you cannot expect any other response.
2. Get to the Point
If you cannot summarize your message in 60 seconds, you may not understand it well enough to communicate it in more detail.
3. Stick to the point
Make it clear where you are going with your communication and stay with it. People do not like to be kept in the dark unless it's a mystery movie.
4. Remember that your body speaks volumes
Up to ninety percent of communication is visual. When you speak, your listeners are watching to be sure that your facial and body clues match what you are saying.
5. Check your tone
The written word, in particular, is often more harsh than intended. Let important written messages sit for a day before you send them and read them for tone as well as content.
6. Say what you mean and mean what you say
People, while trusting by nature, are very perceptive and can find any hint of insincerity or lack of credibility.
7. Listen first for understanding. Use the **CARE** formula
Concentrate – focus on the speaker
Acknowledge – through body language – nod your head
Respond – ask questions for clarification and interest
Empathize – share in their emotions and feelings
8. Practice, practice, practice!
Writing and speaking, as arts, improve with study and practice.
9. Get help with tough communications.
Bounce your ideas off your advisor, friends and/or family. They can provide a clarifying perspective for you.
10. Speak from the Heart
Along with being yourself and showing that to the members of Nom Com, also give answers that have meaning, and show your passions and character.

Additional Preparation Information:

General FFA:

- What is the difference between the FFA & 4-H?
- What is the FFA? FFA means Future Farmers of America, right?
- FFA is just for someone who wants to be a farmer isn't it?
- What's in the FFA for me, I don't want to just learn about farming?
- Name one National FFA Foundation sponsor. One State FFA Foundation sponsor.

Personal FFA:

- How did you become involved in the FFA?
- Who has been your biggest inspiration as an FFA member?
- What is the hardest challenge you face as an FFA member at your high school?
- Have you ever thought about not being an FFA member?
- What is your biggest personal achievement in the FFA?

General Agriculture Education:

- What benefits are there to being enrolled in Ag Education classes?
- What are some of the issues currently facing Ag Education in Idaho?
- Is there a future for Ag Education in Idaho?
- What role do State Officers play on promoting Ag Education?

Personal Agriculture Education:

- How can the State Officers better inform the public about Ag Education and what it has to offer?
- Why do you think Agricultural Education belongs in the public school system?
- Aside from FFA, what was the best experience you have had in your Ag Ed classes?
- Where do you think Ag Ed is headed in the future?

General Agriculture:

- What are some of the topics covered in the Farm Bill?
- What are Genetically Modified Organisms?
- Does cloning and genetic engineering benefit agriculture?
- What impact do the prices of crops or livestock have on the Ag economy?
- What does PETA stand for?

Idaho Agriculture:

- What are some of Idaho's top crops? Where are they grown?
- What agriculture industries can be found where you live?
- How are you involved in Idaho agriculture?

What Would You Do? And What Do You Think?

- What do you feel is the most important attribute a State Officer can possess?
- If you had the opportunity to create a new CDE what would it be and why?
- During a chapter visit, a couple of students help themselves to all of the candy that you have brought for prizes and rewards. How do you handle this situation?
- While flying to National FFA Convention your luggage is lost, what do you do?
- You are on your way to speak at a Chapter Banquet when your car breaks down and there is no way that you will make it on time, what do you do?
- You get to your first chapter visit, while dressing that morning you find that your tie/scarf is missing, what do you do?
- You arrive at a chapter visit, however the Ag teacher forgot that today was an In-service day. There are no students at school. What do you do?
- An FFA member asks you to attend prom with them. How would you handle this?
- You haven't been home in a week, your homework is piled up, and you get a phone call asking you to come to an FFA function for a chapter that is across the state. What do you do?
- At the State Fair you are working in the animal barn when you notice a group of fairgoers making a loud scene near one of the animals. They are claiming FFA is cruel to animals. How will you deal with this?
- At MFE, you notice several members using tobacco products during the conference. What do you do about this?
- A blind person approaches you wanting a description of a CDE. They have never seen any of it before, which event do you tell them about, and what do you say?
- If you had the choice to live one day as A) National Officer, B) A Chapter Advisor, or C) a Greenhand member, which would you choose and why?
- What is your biggest FFA related pet peeve, and why?
- Describe the perfect:
 - Saturday
 - Judging Season
 - Ag Teacher
- Who is your biggest role model and why?
- If you could be anyone for a day – who would you be and why?
- Who has been the most influential person in your FFA career?
- Do you think a state officer should have a boyfriend/girlfriend during their term in office?
- What is your best/worst quality?
- Who is a State Officers biggest fan?
- What do you hope to accomplish as State Officer if elected?

FFA Acronyms/Programs:

ALD	Advanced Leadership Development Conference
BLAST Off	Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers
CDE	Career Development Event
EDGE	Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence
ILSSO	International Leadership Seminar for State Officers
LPS	Local Program Success
MFE	Made For Excellence
NAAE	National Association of Agricultural Educators
NASAE	National Association of Supervisors of Ag Education
NLC SO	National Leadership Conference for State Officers
PAS	National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Org
NCF	New Century Farmers
NFA	New Farmers of America
PALS	Partners in Active Learning Support
SPC	State President's Conference
SAE	Supervised Agricultural Experience Program
WLC	Washington Leadership Conference
WEA	World Experience in Agriculture
DOT	District Officer Training (Idaho)
SLC	State Leadership Conference

Important People in FFA, Agriculture, and Education:

Tom Vilsack	Secretary of Agriculture (USDA)
Dr. Larry Case	National FFA Advisor
Dr. Steve Brown	National FFA Executive Secretary
Dr. W. Dwight Armstrong	National FFA Chief Operating Officer
Celia Gould	Director, Idaho Dept. of Ag
Ben Meyer	Idaho FFA State Advisor
Jessie Kellogg	Idaho FFA State Coordinator
Tammy Ackerland	Idaho FFA Executive Assistant
Laura Wilder	Executive Director, ID FFA Foundation
Levy Randolph, CA	National FFA President
Bethany Bohnenblust, KS	National FFA Secretary
Alexandria Henry, MI	National Eastern Region VP
Chase Rose, MT	National Central Region VP
Chelsea Doss, TN	National Southern Region VP
Randa Braune, TX	National Western Region VP
Henry Groseclose	Father of the FFA
Gus Litner	Inventor of the FFA Jacket
E.M. Tiffany	Writer of the FFA Creed

FFA Places:

Mt. Vernon
Hotel Baltimore
National FFA Center

Past Home of the National FFA Center
Place where the FFA Began
Current Home of the FFA Organization

FFA Cities:

Kansas City, Missouri
Alexandria, Virginia
Indianapolis, Indiana
Indianapolis, Indiana
Boise, Idaho
Boise, Idaho
Moscow, Idaho
Twin Falls, Idaho

City where FFA was founded
Original home of the FFA
Current home of the FFA
Current home of National Convention
Idaho FFA Association Office
Idaho Department of Agriculture
Current home of Idaho CDEs
Current home of Idaho SLC

FFA Knowledge:

- What are the official colors? National Blue & Corn Gold
- What is the FFA Motto?
"Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve"
- What is the mission of the FFA?
"FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education."
- When was the FFA founded? 1928
- When was the Creed adopted? 3rd Convention/1930
- When was the National FFA Foundation started? 1944
- In what year was the FFA granted a federal charter? 1950
- When did the FFA & NFA merge? 1965
- When were females admitted to membership? 1969
- When was the National FFA Alumni established? 1971
- When did the FFA change its name? 1988
- What is the web address of the national FFA? www.ffa.org
- What are the parts of the FFA emblem?
 - Cross section of the ear of corn
 - The rising sun
 - The plow
 - The eagle
 - The Owl
 - The words "Agricultural Education" and "FFA"
- What is the official publication for FFA members? FFA New Horizons

Agricultural Education Knowledge:

- What did the Smith-Hughes National Vocational Education Act first establish?
It set up courses in vocational agriculture.
- What year did the Smith-Hughes Act come into existence? 1917
- What are the 3 major components of Agricultural Education?
 - Classroom Instruction
 - Supervised Ag Experience
 - The FFA Organization
- What are the 4 areas that an SAE might cover?
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Placement
 - Exploratory
 - Research/experimental & analysis
- Be able to name the CDEs for Judging and Leadership
- Be able to name all of the current State Officers and where they are from

Official Dress:

Female Candidates:

- a black skirt, at least knee length, conservative in appearance
- white blouse with official FFA blue scarf
- black, close-toed dress shoes, moderate heels
- black nylon hosiery
- official jacket always zipped to the top, displaying only 3 medals – these should represent the highest degree earned, the highest office held and the highest award earned by the member.
- hairstyles and make-up should compliment the candidate, not detract from their appearance
- use perfume with moderation

Male Candidates:

- black slacks or pants
- white shirt with official FFA blue tie
- black shoes worn with black socks
- official jacket always zipped to the top, displaying only 3 medals – these should represent the highest degree earned, the highest office held and the highest award earned by the member.
- use cologne/perfume with moderation

Strive to look professional and represent yourself and the FFA in the best light possible!!

After the fact

Wow, preparing for FFA state office is an incredible journey in which you really get to know who you are, what you believe in, and what's really important to you. It's a time of preparation that goes far beyond studying facts. It's a reflection of your life.

The selection process is a time of emotional interview, thoughts, and questions about yourself. It doesn't matter if you answer the questions perfectly or if your shirt is without a wrinkle at all times.

What matters is that you are yourself . . . a person defined not by a state officer jacket but by a heart full of love and a desire to help others. It's a stressful time. Don't get caught up in the "right things to say" and the "best way to dress/appear". It's all about who you are.

It's something you've worked extremely hard for. It is a time in which you have to put forth your very all in order to hopefully achieve a goal. You're there with many other amazing people who are there to achieve the same goal. Get to know them.

Do this entire journey because you want to. There's only one you, and it's not worth it to try to be a carbon-copy of someone else. Just be you!

Through interviews, tests, and observation, the nominating committee will nominate a team to dedicate a year of their life to FFA. Many more than those six are well qualified. All you can do is your very best. It may be your purpose to spend a year meeting with FFA members across the state, sharing hopes, dreams, passions, and growth. You may be needed elsewhere to share that same love for life and people. There are people everywhere that need help, and if that's your reason for running, then no matter what the results are, you're in the right place upon the announcement.

I believe that the six young people singled out by the nominating committee are "representatives" chosen from a "group of winners", not "winners" chosen from a "group of representatives."

You won't leave from convention the same person. It's days of incredible growth. There will be great times and there will be a few disappointments along the way, but whatever happens, happens for a reason. Remember that.

Vince Lombardi says, "The spirit, the will to win, and the will to excel are the things that endure. These qualities are so much more important than the events that occur." Or to put it more simply, "It's not who wins the game, but how the game is played."

You'll meet friends that last a lifetime.

You'll learn more about yourself than you ever thought possible.

And you'll risk so much, with so much gained in return. Live it up, and be content knowing the best is yet to be. Don't be afraid to "Accept the Challenge" but be prepared to "Accept the Challenge."

It's important to stress that the State Officer interview process will encompass more than what is printed in this study guide. You're encouraged to reference the materials on page five and talk with your advisor and others about the preparation process.

As an Idaho State FFA Officer Candidate you'll be expected to know various Idaho FFA and Idaho agriculture facts that aren't published in this study guide. Please prepare accordingly.

GOOD LUCK !!!

We would like to express our appreciation to the New Mexico, Oregon, Arizona, Nebraska, and Montana FFA Associations for their help of written materials in forming this guidebook.

-Ben Meyer, State FFA Advisor

-Jessie Kellogg, State FFA Coordinator